



Volume 5, Number 4

Winter 2005

5 Hottest Career Tracks

A recent report identified fields with the most job openings for applicants holding bachelor's or associate's degrees.

1. Nursing

Pursue a career helping others. Employment of registered nurses is expected to grow quickly through at least 2010, driven in part by the development of new medical technologies that need health-care professionals to implement them.

2. Management

Management skills are in demand no matter what field you are in. Your ability to manage people and projects stays with you even if you decide to change your career path. But how do you get started? Online training can help you make the leap to management.

3. Teaching

The demand for qualified teachers shows no signs of slowing down. Many public and private schools need educators so desperately that they are offering bonuses to potential employees, including free tuition for teaching certification and partial repayment of outstanding student loans.



4. Information Technology

High-tech professionals are still hot prospects in spite of the dot-com market downturn.



Traditional companies demand tech talent as they launch business-to-business e-commerce initiatives or catch up in the Web retail market. In fact, dot-com companies account for only 9.6 percent of the overall Internet economy.

5. Accounting

Are you good with numbers? Accountants and auditors do more than just watch the books. A good accountant can help a client, whether an individual or a corporation, set a strategy for financial growth and success. A degree in accounting opens doors to many of the best jobs.

Want to learn more about the hottest trends in the job market? Have a look at the **Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Quarterly**.
www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/ooqhome.htm

Source: MSN Encarta.

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America's Top Jobs

Finding a job can be tough—especially when you're not looking in the right place. Tight as the job market may seem, some jobs are so hot, and growing so quickly, that employers are itching to find qualified candidates to fill them. As the American population grows older and more dependent on technology, the number of medical and computer-related jobs is escalating rapidly to keep pace with demand. According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 15 of the 30 fastest-growing jobs in the United States are in health care, and another seven are computer-related. Here is a list of some of the fastest-growing jobs in the United States, where qualified applicants, not the employers, have the edge—and the vital facts about each—from the bureau's *Occupational Outlook Handbook*:

Medical assistants

- Perform routine administrative and clinical tasks—from answering phones to explaining medications to patients—to help keep medical practitioners' offices running smoothly.
- Most employers prefer graduates of a formal, one- to two-year medical assistant training program. A high school diploma is required, and some employers provide on-the-job training.
- Median annual pay was \$24,610 in 2004.

Network systems and data communications analysts

- Help keep your electronic communications—Internet, voice mail, e-mail and so on—up and running. They test and evaluate systems such as local area networks, wide area networks, intranets and other data communications systems.
- Some employers require an associate's degree. Other, more advanced jobs, require a bachelor's degree in a computer-related field.
- Median annual pay was \$60,600 in 2004.

Environmental engineers

- In response to concerns about environmental damage, they conduct research and develop solutions to environmental problems, including pollution control, ozone depletion and wildlife protection.
- Usually employers require at least a bachelor's degree.
- Median annual pay was \$66,480 in 2004.

Physician assistants

- Provide diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive health care services—including examining and treating patients, making diagnoses and ordering prescriptions—under a doctor's supervision.
- Graduation from a formal physician assistant education program is necessary. Most programs require applicants to have at least a bachelor's degree.
- Median annual pay was \$68,410 in 2004.

Social and human service assistants

- Assess clients' needs and eligibility for services such as food stamps, arrange for transportation and provide emotional support. They also monitor case records and report progress.
- Usually employers require an associate's degree or certificate, plus relevant work experience.
- Median annual pay was \$24,270 in 2004.



Home health aides

- Help elderly, disabled and convalescent people live at home instead of in a hospital or nursing home by assisting with housekeeping, bathing and other tasks.
- Usually short-term, on-the-job training is needed. Workers whose employers are covered by Medicare must complete 75 hours of training and pass a competency test.
- Median annual pay was \$18,330 in 2004.

Postsecondary teachers

- Instruct students in a variety of academic and vocational subjects beyond the high school level to help them earn a degree or improve their knowledge or skills. They may prepare lessons or lectures, grade assignments and conduct extensive research in their fields. Most of these teachers work on college and university faculties, but others work as postsecondary vocational education teachers and graduate teaching assistants.
- The education required depends on the employer and subject taught. At four-year research institutions, faculty usually hold a doctorate degree and some conduct postdoctoral research. At two-year colleges, a master's degree is standard.
- Median annual pay was \$49,040 in 2002, but it varies widely depending on rank, subject taught and employer.

Medical records and health information technicians

- Assemble and assess patients' medical charts, determine a facility's Medicare and other insurance reimbursements, and use computer software to help improve patient care and cut costs.
- An associate's degree and a written examination are needed.
- Median annual pay was \$25,590 in 2004.

Computer software engineers

- Design, develop, test and evaluate the software and systems computers' need to perform their applications.
- A bachelor's degree, relevant work experience, and strong computer skills are required.
- Median annual pay was about \$75,000 in 2004.

Physical therapist assistants

- Help provide treatment including exercises and ultrasounds, record the patient's responses to treatment and report the outcome of each treatment to the physical therapist.
- Usually employers require an associate's degree and on-the-job training, and some states require a license.
- Median annual pay was \$37,890 in 2004.

Source: Laura Morsch, CareerBuilder.com.

10 Most Dangerous Jobs

They help us build our houses and feed our families. They deliver our packages and take away our trash, and when we need a ride, they're there to whisk us away.

And they're risking their lives to do it.

According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the workers most likely to be killed at work aren't the ones donning bullet-proof vests to capture criminals or saving victims from fire-engulfed buildings. Instead, the workers most likely to die on the job are the ones who help provide us with our daily needs like a safe home, food, and electricity.

The typical worker has a low risk of fatal injuries at work—the fatality rate for all occupations is 4.1 per 100,000 employed. But these hazardous jobs, all of which had a minimum of 30 fatalities in 2004 and 40,000 people employed, are far riskier. The BLS lists these occupations as 10 of the most dangerous in the nation:

1. Logging workers

Fatalities: 92.4 per 100,000 employed

Median Pay: \$29,730

Logging and timber workers duties include cutting down trees and cutting and moving logs, providing the raw material for countless products. The nature of their work puts them at constant risk of being killed by heavy, falling objects.

2. Aircraft pilots and flight engineers

Fatalities: 92.4 per 100,000 employed

Median pay: \$129,250—but may be much lower for commercial pilots.

Although aircraft pilots and flight engineers have one of the most dangerous jobs in the nation, don't swear off air travel just yet. This category also includes commercial pilots of smaller aircrafts—including crop dusters and air taxis—that are far more likely to crash than your typical 747.

3. Fishers and related workers

Fatalities: 86.4 per 100,000 employed

Median Pay: \$24,100

Fishers endure storms, fog, wind, and hazardous working conditions before bringing you the fresh salmon on your dinner plate. Perilous weather puts fishers at risk of drowning if their boat capsizes or they fall overboard. And if they suffer serious injuries while at sea, help isn't readily available.

4. Structural iron and steel workers

Fatalities: 47 per 100,000 employed

Median pay: \$42,430

These workers climb dozens of stories to lay the iron and steel that form buildings, bridges and other structures. Despite strapping on harnesses and other safety gear, structural iron and steel workers face a high risk of fatal injuries from falls.



5. Refuse and recyclable material collectors

Fatalities: 43.2 per 100,000 employed

Median pay: \$25,760

When refuse and recyclable material collectors take away your trash, they risk traffic accidents and fatal injuries from explosions of hazardous materials. According to a University of Miami study, the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities for these workers is impatient motorists who try to pass the garbage truck and hit the driver.

6. Farmers and ranchers

Fatalities: 37.5 per 100,000 employed

Median pay: \$40,440

Farmers and ranchers raise animals and plant, cultivate, and harvest crops used to produce our food. However, the tractors and machinery used by these workers can be very dangerous: Non-highway vehicle accidents accounted for 40 percent of occupational fatalities for farmers and ranchers in 2004.

7. Roofers

Fatalities: 34.9 per 100,000 employed

Median pay: \$30,840

When these workers climb atop your house to build or repair your roof, they risk slipping or falling from scaffolds, ladders, or roofs, or burning themselves on flammable, toxic materials.

8. Electrical power line installers and repairers

Fatalities: 30 per 100,000 employed

Median pay: \$49,100

When your lights go out, line installers and repairers climb power poles and towers to get your electricity up and running. Power lines are typically high off the ground, so workers are at high risk of injury due to falls. Plus, these workers are often at risk of electrocution from contact with the high-voltage power lines.

9. Driver/sales workers and truck drivers

Fatalities: 27.6 per 100,000 employed

Truck driver median pay: \$33,520

Driver/sales worker median pay: \$20,090

Truck drivers transport goods including cars and livestock, and driver/sales workers deliver and sell their firm's products over established routes. Both groups spend the majority of their time on the road, putting them at high risk of highway vehicle crashes.

10. Taxi drivers and chauffeurs

Fatalities: 24.2 per 100,000 employed

Median pay: \$19,570

The dangers of shuttling around patrons go far beyond highway crashes. Taxi drivers, who often work alone and carry large amounts of cash, may also find themselves victims of robbery and homicide.

Source: Laura Morsch, CareerBuilder.com.

Jobs on the Cutting Edge

One of the keys to finding a job is looking for one that's in-demand. Here is a list of some more of the fastest-growing jobs in the United States, where qualified applicants, not the employers, have the edge—and the vital facts about each—from the BLS's *Occupational Outlook Handbook*:

Medical Records Clerks

- Medical records and health information technicians typically work in a doctor's office. They make sure a patient's medical chart is complete and accurate and input the data into a computer.
- Those entering the field usually have an associate's degree from a community or junior college and have taken coursework including medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, legal aspects of health information, coding, and abstraction of data and statistics.
- Median annual earnings are \$23,890.

Preschool Teachers

- Preschool teachers capitalize on children's play to further language and vocabulary development, improve social skills, and introduce science and math concepts to children younger than kindergarten age.
- Some states require a bachelor's degree in early childhood education; others require an associate's degree, and still others require certification by a nationally recognized authority. The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, the most common type of certification, requires a mix of classroom training and experience working with children, along with an independent assessment of an individual's competence.
- Median earnings are \$19,270.



Physical Therapists

- Physical therapists provide services that help restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients suffering from injuries or disease.
- After graduating from an accredited physical therapist educational program, therapists must pass a licensure exam before they can practice.
- Median annual earnings are \$57,330.

Database Administrators

- Database administrators identify user requirements, set up computer databases, test and coordinate modifications to computer systems, ensure system performance, and add new users to the system.
- Despite employers' preference for those with technical degrees, those with degrees in a variety of majors and/or certifications find work as database administrators. The level of education and type of training that employers require depend on their needs.
- Median annual earnings are \$55,480.

Veterinary Technicians

- Animal lovers get satisfaction in this occupation. Aspects of the work however, can sometimes be unpleasant as well as physically and emotionally demanding because they perform many of the same duties for a veterinarian that a nurse would for a physician, including routine laboratory and clinical procedures.
- Workers generally complete a two-year or four-year veterinary technology program and must pass a state examination.
- Median earnings are about \$22,950 annually.



Dental Assistants

- Dental assistants perform a variety of patient care, office and laboratory duties, and work chairside as dentists examine and treat patients.
- Most assistants learn their skills on the job, although an increasing number are trained in dental-assisting programs, which usually take one year or less to complete.
- Earnings average about \$13.10 per hour.

Computer Systems Analysts

- To help an organization maximize its investment in equipment, personnel, and business processes, systems analysts solve computer problems and plan and develop new computer systems. They also may devise ways to apply existing systems' resources to additional operations.
- Requirements range from a two-year degree to a graduate degree and may include continuing education and certification.
- Median annual earnings are \$62,890.

Occupational Therapists

- Occupational therapists help people improve their ability to perform tasks in their daily living and working environments. They work with individuals who have conditions that are mentally, physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabling. They also help them to develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills.
- A bachelor's degree in occupational therapy is the minimum educational requirement; beginning in 2007, however, a master's degree or higher will be required.
- Median annual earnings are about \$51,990.



Source: Kate Lorenz, *CareerBuilder.com*.

Cool Jobs

When it comes down to it, most people want a job that they enjoy. Sure, there are jobs that are prestigious: Doctors, scientists, firemen, teachers, and military officers were identified as those carrying the most prestige in a 2004 Harris Poll.

But wouldn't it be great to have a really cool job? Don't you want a job that makes people say: "She is so lucky," or "He has the best job"? And how many people are lucky enough to truly love their jobs?

Here are some occupations that offer some of the coolest jobs around:

Athletic Training

One person who is vital to any athletic team is the athletic trainer. Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC, for Athletic Trainer, Certified) ensure that athletes and others are prepared physically for any challenge and help when injuries and problems occur. According to the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), athletic trainers "specialize in injury and illness prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation for all physically active people, including the general public."

Broadcasting

Having a career in television or radio sounds exciting—and maybe even glamorous. Whether it's delivering the 6 o'clock news or hosting a drive-time radio show, what could be better than working in an environment where you get to listen to music or interview interesting people all day, right? Those in the broadcast industry can attest to the fact that while their careers are certainly interesting, there is more to TV and radio than just sounding or looking good on the air.

Image Consulting

You might have seen them while watching TV shows such as "Extreme Makeover," "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," or "What Not to Wear." Or you might have heard that Martha Stewart needed one to give her advice on how to look sympathetic to a jury. And all the faces that grace the cover of *U.S. Weekly* have one. We're talking about image consultants, and they have one of the hottest careers today. Also known as wardrobe consultants, fashion stylists or makeover specialists, image consultants are paid to show people how to create a fabulous impression.

Music Therapy

Would you love to have a career in music, but fear you wouldn't earn a regular paycheck? Do you want to pursue a career in the medical field, but don't want to go to school for the next dozen years? Would you like to have a job in which you can help others and still bring in a decent salary and have a manageable schedule? If you answered "yes" to one or all of these questions, then perhaps a career in music therapy is for you.

Event Planner

When it comes to event planning careers, there are two different routes to choose. A corporate event planner works as an employee of a corporation to plan only that company's events. These can range from client entertainment dinners and trips to annual meetings and incentive trips for employees or partners. The other avenue is to work for an event planning company like In Focus Events that plans and produces corporate meetings, events, and incentive travel for a variety of clients.

Fashion Buying

Love to shop? You can make a career of it as a fashion buyer. Get the inside scoop on this important function on the business side of the fashion industry. Buying and merchandising refers to the process by which stores purchase merchandise from wholesalers and, in turn, sell it to customers.

Crime Scene Investigation

Do you think of naming your children Gil, Horatio or Warrick? Are songs by The Who frequently playing in your head? Chances are you are a huge fan of CSI, the TV phenomenon that has spurred three hit series and has a hot syndication following. Thanks to the popularity of the hit series, there's a growing curiosity in careers in forensics and criminology. Criminalistics and forensics, which is projected to grow as fast as the average industry growth by the BLS, is the science and profession dealing with the recognition, collection, identification, individualization, and interpretation of physical evidence and the application of the natural sciences to law-science matters.

Bottom line: Whatever you do, your job should be fulfilling for you personally—whether it carries prestige, allows you to help people, brings in the money, gives you great travel opportunities, or is just plain cool. At the end of the day this will keep you satisfied on the job and in life.



Source: Kate Lorenz,
CareerBuilder.com.

Is Your Résumé a Lie?

A résumé is a marketing tool—it should showcase your experience and qualifications in the most succinct and relevant way possible. And that often means being selective in the kind of information that you include or crafty in your wording.

But that doesn't mean you should lie. A survey by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 96 percent of HR professionals always conduct reference checks on job candidates, and more than half say they sometimes find inconsistencies.

Recruiters get so annoyed by misleading information on résumés that “lying or misleading information” ranked as one of the top recruiter pet peeves in a survey by Resumedoctor.com.

According to the survey, the most common misleading information commonly put on résumés are:

- Inflated titles
- Inaccurate dates to cover up job hopping or gaps of employment
- Half-finished degrees, inflated education, or “purchased” degrees that do not mean anything
- Inflated salaries
- Inflated accomplishments
- Out and out lies in regards to specific roles and duties

But what if your job is equivalent to a vice president of technology and your job title is “senior project leader”? Is changing your job title on your résumé to reflect your responsibilities lying?

The crucial line between marketing and lying on a résumé isn't always clearly drawn. But for those wondering how much résumé puffery is too much, heed these tips from 25-year HR leadership veteran and workplace commentator Liz Ryan:

1. You CANNOT change your dates of employment.

Were you a contract person hired on after a period of time? Say so on your résumé. You can also mention you did contract or consulting work after leaving the company's regular payroll. But the dates must match your actual employment dates.

2. You CAN, to a limited degree, change the titles on your résumé.

Ryan suggests that if your company used odd job titles, it's okay to use an equivalent title that most people would recognize. However this does not mean it's acceptable to inflate your job title to imply you had more responsibility that you actually did. “You cannot turn yourself from an assistant manager to a manager with a wave of your wand,” Ryan says. Likewise, if you worked in the purchasing department, you can't write that you were in marketing.

3. You CANNOT mess around with academic credentials.

If you're two credits short of a degree, say so on your résumé. A professional-development course at a university is not the same thing as an actual academic (for-credit) course—and should not be treated as such. And you cannot change your degree from Chemistry to Business—that is just as serious a crime as inventing a degree, because that's what you're essentially doing.

4. You CAN leave out irrelevant jobs.

If you are willing to explain a three-month gap in between jobs, you don't have to mention that you took a horrible job at a boiler-room sales operation and quit right away. You also don't need to list every job you've had for the last 25 years. Stick with the most recent and relevant experience.

5. You CANNOT get away with lying if your company went under.

Some candidates feel that they can take major liberties with their résumés when the companies they've worked for no longer exist. But thanks to websites like LinkedIn.com, employers can talk to people who worked at your long-gone company and verify your story.

Source: Laura Morsch, CareerBuilder.com.

First Job Interviews



Got the first-job jitters? Just remember that your interviewer has probably met dozens, if not hundreds, of candidates over the years, so walk in the door with great posture and present a well-groomed you from head-to-toe: hair, skin, manicured nails, polished shoes, and handbag. It's best to be tastefully dressed and accessorized, classic and stylish but not overly trendy. Pass that “first glance” test with a dark-colored neutral suit—navy, black, brown, or gray—in a solid color, pinstripe pattern or flat tweed. If you do wear a skirt, make it knee-length, although nowadays, tailored pants are acceptable. As for your top and accessories, think sensibly: a blouse or a plain sweater, simple jewelry, nude-colored pantyhose, a good leather bag or briefcase and a pair of mid-heel pumps.

Trend Tip: Do bring an extra pair of pantyhose with you, especially if you're not used to wearing them—avoid snag and run disasters! And put the manicure and haircut (or hair color) on your priority list.

Source: Judy Gordon, “The Today Show” Style Editor; www.msnbc.msn.com.

To order materials, please indicate the number of items requested on the line to the left of the product name and mail or fax to:

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Community Profiles...

These documents are provided to help the 17 Workforce Investment Areas in Virginia with their strategic planning. They feature a wealth of information including demographic, economic, and educational data. Graphs are included as well as summary information for interpreting the data. To learn more, go to velma.virtuallmi.com or contact (804) 786-8223 for more details.

THE FORUM is a quarterly newsletter of the Virginia Employment Commission. It is produced and distributed by the Virginia Employment Commission in Richmond. Articles are prepared by Marilyn Baker, Program Support Technician Senior. Layout, graphics and design by Linda Simmons.

The Virginia Employment Commission is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Editorial comments, change of address information, and publication requests should be sent to:

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- _____ **Virginia Job Outlook 2002–2012**—top occupations, annual number of openings, and annual average salaries by educational attainment
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Display posters

- _____ **Skills Needed for Success in the Workplace**—24" × 18"
- _____ **Visualize - Starting Your Own Business**—24" × 18"
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Occupational Wage Data Report: 2004*

Statewide, Virginia
Local Workforce Investment Areas
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* Reference materials only.

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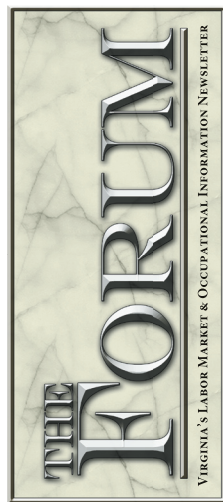
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Volume 5, Number 4 Winter 2005

Make Your Hobby Work for You

How to Turn a Pastime into a Career

Do you have a hobby—something you really enjoy doing in your spare time? Do you love gardening, taking care of animals, dancing, or hiking? Have you ever wondered what it would be like if you could spend more time on your hobby and less time at work? Maybe it's not an either/or situation. Perhaps you can do both at the same time.

When choosing a career, one of the things you must consider is your interests. Why then do so many people not even think about their hobbies when a hobby is, in fact, an interest. Perhaps it's because even Webster's Dictionary defines a hobby as "a pursuit outside one's regular occupation"

(Merriam-Webster Online). Maybe this is a rule you should break. After all, no one ever said your hobby had to stay separate from your occupation. In addition people are usually very skilled at their hobbies. The combination of interest and skill are very compelling reasons to choose a particular career.

"Who's going to hire someone who loves making beaded jewelry?" you may ask yourself. Good question. Don't wait for someone to hire you. Start your own business. That may be the best way to incorporate your hobby into your career. Those with hobbies that involve creating things,

i.e. jewelry, clothing, or pottery, may do well to sell those items on their own. Before you go forward with your plans, though, you should find out whether being an entrepreneur is for you.

Let's say you determine that running a small business isn't for you. You can still turn your hobby into a career, but you may have to get some formal training. Let's go back to the person who loves making beaded jewelry. That person probably knows the latest jewelry styles, has an understanding of what styles look good on different people, and also is skilled in using the tools of the trade. A number of options exist for that person. He or she could go to school to learn how to be a jewelry designer. Alternately, that person could become a jewelry buyer for a department store or a salesperson in a jewelry store. He or she could also learn to become a jeweler by taking courses at a trade school or by learning on the job.

When you attempt to turn your hobby into a career don't forget to do your homework. Even though you may have enjoyed training your 34 parakeets to sing the "National Anthem," that doesn't mean you're cut out to be an animal trainer. Be sure to research your career choice thoroughly. There may be aspects of it that just aren't for you. In that case, "stick to your day job," as they say, and save your hobby for your free time.

Source: Dawn Rosenberg McKay, careerplanning.about.com.



People Are Asking...

How can I get better grades?

If you or your parents are worried about your report cards, try some of these simple tips.

- **Create a study plan.** Figure out how much time you need to spend on each subject, and then make a weekly schedule. Find out when major projects are due, and put them on a calendar. Use your calendar to figure out when you need to start working on them.
- **Do your homework.** Most teachers base grades on homework, and it's easier to keep up with your assignments than it is to dig yourself out of a hole.
- **Talk to your teachers.** They may have suggestions about what you can do to learn more and improve in weak areas. But you have to ask!
- **Learn from your mistakes.** Try to figure out what went wrong. Did you misunderstand the assignment, wait until the last minute to study for a test, or was there some other problem? Once you determine what went wrong, you can work on doing better the next time.
- **Get a tutor if you are having problems in a particular subject.** A student in a class ahead of you might be willing to help. Your school may be able to help you find someone. Or perhaps you want a professional tutor. Don't expect overnight improvement, but personalized help can really help some students.
- **Study with friends.** Sometimes it's hard to get started on homework, but if you agree to meet with one or two friends to do your work, you'll have a built-in schedule.

Source: encarta.msn.com.



Virginia Employment Commission

Labor Market & Demographic Analysis

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